(b) There was consensus among member-countries that negotiations on South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) Agreement must proceed as per schedule so that it comes into force on 1st January 2006 as already agreed upon. Implementation of SAFTA Agreement will give a significant boost to economic activities in the region.

Import of elementary mercury

1014. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the import of elementary mercury has increased manifold during the last few years;

(b) if so, the details of imports during the last three years; and

(c) the names of industries who are importing mercury and whether mercury is being used as consumer product and if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. EUVNGOVAN) : (a) and (b) The details of import of mercury are as under:—

Year	Quantity (in tons)	Value (Rs. in crore)
2001-02	260.44	4.48
2002-03	531.20	8.66
2003-04	197.46	4.06

(c) Mercury is used by industries engaged in making thermometers, barometers, electrical contacts, arc rectifiers, automatic switches, mercury vapour lamps and mercury-vapour boilers of large power installation etc. It is also employed in the electrolytic preparation of chlorine, caustic soda, acetic acid and acetone etc.

India International Trade Fair

1015. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of visitors in the International Trade Fair held from November 14,2004 this year;

(b) whether it is a fact that adequate arrangements were not made for their comfort and conveniences;

(c) the reason for the inability of the ITPO to make adequate arrangements;

(d) how Government propose to deal with increasing crowds at this trade fair site;

(e) whether the trade fair would be held twice every year; and

(f) the details of the alternative plans being considered by ITPO in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) 26 lakhs (approximately).

(b) to (d) No, Sir. The following arrangements were made by India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO) in co-operation with Delhi Police, DTC and other local authorities for the convenience and comfort of visitors:-

(i) Park-n-Ride facility was provided;

(ii) A DTC control room was set up to provide efficient services to the visitors using public transport system.

(iii) A new pedestrian bridge was constructed near Supreme Court for crossing Mathura Road.

(iv) Congestion-free traffic was ensured on Mathura Road.

(v) A Slip Road was constructed at the Mathura Road — Bhairon Marg junction for smooth movement of traffic.

(vi) Tickets were also sold through Mother Dairy booths, selected branches of Andhra Bank and DTC at concessional rates so that people could buy them nearer their homes;

(vii) Appropriate security arrangements were made in Pragati Maidan.

(viii) Adequate public conveniences - toilets, conservancy, drinking water, food outlets, were provided in Pragati Maidan for the visitors.

(ix) Banks and Post Office in Pragati Maidan were kept open beyond normal working hours and on holidays during the Fair.

(e) No such proposal is presently under consideration.

(f) Does not arise.

Special Economic Zones in Kerala

1016. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have accorded sanction to set up a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) at Kochi in Kerala;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what are the stipulations specified in the new Foreign Trade Policy relating to development of the towns of export excellence and the towns of Kerala, where the concerned sectors achieved the cross mark?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) and (b) A Special Economic Zone (SEZ) is already functional at Kakkanad,Cochin in Kerala. Further, approval has been given to the Cochin Port Trust proposal to set up a port based SEZ at Vallarpadam/Puthuvypeen in Kerala.

(c) In terms of paragraph 3.3 of the Foreign Trade Policy (FTP), selected towns producing goods of Rs. 1000 crore or more will be notified as Towns of Export Excellence on the basis of their potential for growth in exports. However, for the Towns of Export Excellence in the Handloom, Handicrafts, Agriculture and Fisheries sectors, the threshold limit would be Rs. 250 crore. Kanoor and AEKK (Aroor, Ezhupunna, Kodanthuruthu and Kuthiathodu) in Kerala have so far been listed as Towns of Export Excellence for Handlooms and Marine products respectively as per Appendix 41 of the Handbook of Procedures (Vol. I) of FTP.

Indo-Chinese trade relations

1017. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are willing to build a long term and sustainable